



BPYC-134

Block 4

**CRITICAL AND DIALECTIC
PHILOSOPHIES**

BLOCK INTRODUCTION

Idealism signifies the view that everyday world of things and people are not the world as it really is but simply as it appears to be. In Idealism, concepts are often viewed as being real. Thus ‘humankind’ is seen to have a reality beyond being just an idea. Perhaps the most influential critical Idealist was Immanuel Kant. After Kant’s critical and transcendental views, Hegel, through his idealistic dialectical proposal, concluded that the finite world is a reflection of the mind, which alone is truly real and that Truth is just the coherence between thoughts. Diverging from the Hegelian proposal, Karl Marx formulated a materialistic version of the dialectical method to suggest that Reality is fundamentally material in nature.

Unit 12, titled “Kant,” explains that Immanuel Kant, through his masterpiece *Critique of Pure Reason*, has made an attempt to resolve the issues emerging from the conflict between rationalistic and empiricist approaches by proposing a system that was fundamentally *a priori* but without sacrificing the value of the phenomenal reality. According to his approach, the reality that human beings know is basically the reality constituted or constructed by human beings themselves. In a nutshell, with the help of a set of *a priori* forms and the phenomenal data, the world – all sciences and all forms of knowledge – is shaped.

Unit 13, titled “Hegel,” highlights the philosophical thought of Georg Hegel who devoted his life wholly to academic pursuit. His science of logic, dialectical reasoning, encyclopedia of philosophical sciences, Philosophy of Right – all provide an intellectual foundation for modern nationalism. He was an idealist who methodically constructed a comprehensive system of thought.

Unit 14 is on the philosophical thinking of Karl Marx. In this unit the students will be introduced to his life, philosophical heritage of German Idealism, and the political and economic situation of the time that played a major role in his thinking. Apart from this, we have his historical materialism, the struggle that goes on between the classes, the role played by the labour and how one becomes alienated in the process.

Structure

- 12.0 Objectives
- 12.1 Introduction
- 12.3 The Structure of the *Critique of Pure Reason*
- 12.4 Challenge to Metaphysics
- 12.5 Faculties and Nature of Knowledge
- 12.6 Transcendental Freedom
- 12.7 The Transcendental Ideal for Systematic Unity
- 12.8 Phenomenon vs. Noumenon
- 12.9 Synthetic *a priori* Character of Knowledge
- 12.10 Let Us Sum Up
- 12.11 Key Words
- 12.12 Further Readings and References
- 12.13 Answers to Check Your Progress

12.0 OBJECTIVES

As you study this unit, you will have to pay special attention to:

- The ongoing philosophical debate between rationalism and empiricism
- The paradigm of knowledge, which according to an empiricist is to acquire knowledge through the senses and to a rationalist is to acquire knowledge through the reason or understanding.

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) was a German philosopher. He was a prominent enlightenment thinker. His major works are,

- Critique of Pure Reason (1781)
- Prolegomena of Any Future Metaphysics (1783)
- An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment? (1784)

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- Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals (1785)
- Critique of Practical reason (1788)
- Critique of Judgment (1790)
- Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch (1795)

Immanuel Kant, through his philosophical enterprise known as critical idealism or transcendental idealism, has made an attempt to resolve the issues emerging from the conflict between rationalistic and empiricist approaches by proposing a system that was fundamentally *a priori* but without sacrificing the value of the phenomenal reality. According to his approach, the reality that human beings know is basically the reality constituted or constructed by human beings themselves. In a nutshell, with the help of a set of *a priori* forms and the phenomenal data, the world – all sciences and all forms of knowledge – is shaped. The same is the case with regard to the practical sphere: the autonomous individual, through the proper exercise of the will, constructs the moral world. So, the Kantian approach to theoretical as well as practical knowledge is centered on the individual agent.

Kant's definitive insistence that we can have *a priori* knowledge, which is necessary and universal, however, does not blind him to the contributions of the senses. He holds that all our knowledge is ultimately rooted in sense intuitions as well as in concepts; all the same, he categorically denies that we could have theoretical knowledge about anything that lies beyond the bounds of *possible experience*. Thus, in the *Prolegomena*, Kant claims that "the word 'transcendental' ... does not signify something passing beyond all experience but something that indeed precedes it *a priori*, but that is intended to make cognition of experience possible" (*Prolegomena*, Appendix, Ak. 4:373n). It is in this sense that he calls his philosophy transcendental.

An inquiry into the nature of knowledge is, therefore, an inquiry into the cognitive constitution of the subject, and not into the nature of the objects, but concerns only what makes it possible. Hence, he defines his philosophy as "a science of the mere examination of reason, its sources and limits" (*Critique of Pure Reason* (CPR) A11/B25). Understood negatively, according to Beck, it highlights the 'police' function of the *Critique* "in preventing or exposing the dialectical illusions of speculative metaphysics" (Beck, 44), while, understood positively, it secures to reason the "sure path of science" in the wake of the challenges from rationalism and empiricism. Thus, practically speaking, the *Critique* becomes the final court of appeal for Kant, even to the extent of becoming a limiting

factor in his further philosophical endeavour.

The unifying thought that runs through the whole of the *Critique* is his self-proclaimed novel question “How is synthetic *a priori* knowledge possible?” (CPR B19). To begin with, Kant assumes that synthetic *a priori* propositions exist both in pure mathematics and physics, and his conviction about the success of these branches of knowledge impels him to invest himself in critical inquiry with a view to justify the possibility of such propositions in the realms of knowledge and morality. Thus, the critical problem, which he formulates against the backdrop of dogmatic and empiricist philosophies, unravels in the first *Critique* by posing the problem of whether and to what extent can we find *a priori* principles of knowledge in the respective faculties of reason, understanding, and judgment. As for the claims of the *Critique* itself, the apparent transcendent nature of *a priori* knowledge is rectified, and its concreteness safeguarded by Kant, by his incessant insistence that “we come to know of *a priori* ideas, like all other ideas, only through experience ... [and] that this *a priori* knowledge nevertheless must apply to object of experience...” (Paton, 1:563-64). This is possible, he claims, not as a result of the independent nature of the things, but due to the nature of the intellectual faculties. This step, according to Kant, ensures both the purity and validity of transcendental knowledge, which “entitles him to develop the entire system of pure speculative reason without reference to anything other than the abstract principles” and “without reference to any specific empirical object” (Van De Pitte, 1024).

12.2 THE STRUCTURE OF THE *CRITIQUE OF PURE REASON*

The centrality of the first *Critique* for Kant is achieved in the architectonic plan of his work where the triad of the Aesthetic-Analytic-Dialectic attempts to unveil the nature and function of different faculties in acquiring knowledge, each, in turn, addressing the contributions of sensibility, understanding, and reason, respectively. Stated in general, while the Aesthetic answers the question “How are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible in mathematics?” the Analytic takes up the question “How are these judgments possible in natural science?” Finally, the Dialectic addresses the issue of the impossibility of synthetic *a priori* judgments in metaphysics.

The Transcendental Aesthetic, as concerned with sensibility or intuition, and identified

by Kant as the faculty of sensing objects, provides the primary data for knowledge. In this section he addresses the issue of the determination of space and time, the only *a priori* intuitions we possess, which provide the sensible form of experience. Space and time are the pure forms of sensibility, which are imposed by the human mind on to the world of experience, as the elements of our subjective cognitive constitution. The nature of space and time, for Kant, is very much Euclidean. In the Aesthetic Kant assumes that Euclidean geometry is a body of *a priori* knowledge, although the regressive method that he has adopted in this section does not attempt to prove its validity.

In the second section, Transcendental Analytic, Kant goes one step further by showing that any meaningful claim to theoretical knowledge requires not only sensibility, but the spontaneous faculty of understanding too. In order to show that synthetic *a priori* judgments are possible, it is necessary that apart from the contribution of intuition, there must be the element of conception, whereby the mind contributes its vital share. Kant asserts that there are three subjective sources of knowledge, such as sense, imagination, and apperception, on which the process of synthesis is grounded. Hence, Kant undertakes an explication of the generation of the categories in the knowing process, and attempts to deduce their validity. The finding that the categories of the understanding are *a priori* implies that they do not depend on the nature of the things, but on the nature of our thought, though, at the same time, they are meaningless and empty apart from their application to spatial and temporal things given in intuition.

Proceeding further, and applying the results of the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic, Kant identifies in the Transcendental Dialectic the excesses in the employment of reason, which tends to apply its own ideas in the realms that lie beyond the reach of sensibility and understanding. The intellectual capacities, namely, the capacity of referring to objects by experiencing them within a spatio-temporal framework, and the capacity of bringing objects under general concepts set the limits of our valid knowledge. When these limits are transgressed, it results in transcendental illusion, and the basic source of this illusion is reason's illegitimate pursuit for completeness and unity, i.e., advancing "towards completeness by an ascent to ever higher conditions and so to give our knowledge the greatest possible unity of reason" (CPR A309/B365). Thus, in the Dialectic, he establishes that purely rational knowledge is impossible, which explicitly denies that the aim of the rationalist philosophy, and the content of dogmatic metaphysics are attainable. However, it must be borne in mind that Kant does not prove that the dogmas

of the rationalist metaphysics are false, but only that they cannot be known to be true in the mental framework adopted in the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic. In short, according to the Transcendental Dialectic, although reason can conceive of the unconditioned and employ it (only as an ideal) for some of its own purposes, it can have no theoretical knowledge of it.

Thus, the perspective of the critical philosophy, which shapes the argument of the *Critique*, holds that the ideas of reason are necessary, though they have only a regulative purpose. Their constitutive function is rejected outright, saying that they cannot be given in objective experience according to the yardsticks of the Transcendental Aesthetic and Analytic. Later, in the critical endeavor, we find Kant taking this conclusion to new heights both in the second and third *Critiques*, i.e., in the moral, and aesthetic and teleological realms, through which he attempts to pave the way for an integrated philosophy of the theoretical and the practical.

Check Your Progress I

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What does Kant mean by transcendental?

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12.3 CHALLENGE TO METAPHYSICS

Kant proposes a “change in point of view” (*Critique of Pure reason* (CPR) Bxxii note) to reform metaphysics from the shackles of dogmatism and scepticism. While dogmatism, according to Kant, trusts in the principles of metaphysics “without a previous critique of the faculty of reason itself, merely with a view to their success,” scepticism holds a “general mistrust in pure reason,” again, “without a previous critique, merely with a view to the failure of its assertions” (Kant, *On a Discovery*, 159 [Ak VIII, 226-27]). In the second edition Preface of the first *Critique*, he holds that “metaphysics is a completely isolated speculative science of reason, which soars far above the teachings of experience, and in which reason is indeed meant to be its own pupil. Metaphysics has hitherto been a merely random groping ..., a groping among mere concepts” (CPR Bxv).

In spite of his strictures on the traditional metaphysics, he is ready to admit that “the idea

of [metaphysics] is as old as speculative human reason,” and is “what rational being does not speculate either in scholastic or in popular fashion?” (CPR A842/B871). Interestingly, Kant opens the first *Critique* with a statement of the inevitability of metaphysics, indicating that it is “prescribed by the very nature of reason itself” (CPR Avii). Articulating this problem further, later in the *Critique*, he compares it to a constantly repeated act of ever returning “to a beloved one with whom we have had a quarrel” (CPR A850/B878), and in the *Prolegomena* to a “favourite child” (*Prolegomena* §57, Ak. IV, 353). He considers the human tendency towards metaphysics as quite natural or inherent to the faculty of reason, and holds that it is impossible to conceive of reason to be devoid of the same, despite the illusion resulting from it.

Dogmatic metaphysics attempts to have *a priori* knowledge of reality independent of sensibility and experience. The pure intellectual method through which metaphysicians arrive at indisputable knowledge of the ultimate nature of objects, however, is radically mistaken and empty, as Kant shows in the *Critique*. This, as Kemp Smith puts it, “transgresses the limits of possible experience, and contains only pretended knowledge” (Smith, 70), and Kant refutes it in the Transcendental Aesthetic, Analytic, and Dialectic of the *Critique*.

The new metaphysics, which, for Kant, is only worthy of the name, is metaphysics as a science, “a system of *a priori* knowledge from mere concepts” (*Metaphysic of Morals*, Ak. VI, 216), “the inventory of all our possessions through pure reason, systematically arranged” (CPR Axx). This science adopts a constructive procedure, or Schematism, and fuses the empirical and the formal. As it is impossible to give any of the ideas of reason in sensible intuition to which no application of categories is admissible, Kant rejects the possibility of having any knowledge of them, whereby, from the perspective of theoretical reason, also rejecting their reality altogether. However, he has been able to show that “one kind of metaphysics is possible, which is enough to save the conception of cognition as a rational phenomenon, and of ourselves, correlatively, as rational beings” (Gardner, 307). Though the thrust of Kant is more about the limits of our knowledge, he positively maintains that the *Critique* lays the foundation for the metaphysics of nature and morality – of physics with respect to the material order (phenomenal realm), and of morality with respect to the intelligible order (noumenal realm).

Assuming that the quest of human reason for metaphysics is inherent to human nature (“natural disposition”), he looks for a justification of its ideas in the practical realm.

Metaphysics of morals is indirectly a concession Kant gives to fulfil the natural quest of human reason for the realization of its ultimate ideals, which he rejects as untenable on the basis of the principles enshrined in the *Critique* itself. The primacy of the practical, which is the hallmark of transcendental philosophy, however, indicates that this move is not only justifiable, but warranted for developing the complete system of critical philosophy. Kant tailors human natural disposition for metaphysics into the new metaphysics.

12.4 FACULTIES AND NATURE OF KNOWLEDGE

It is at the foundation of Kant's transcendental programme to identify and examine the nature of the powers of human knowing; only then can we be equipped to determine the extent of our knowledge "that is absolutely objective" (CPR A249). His philosophical thrust to limit the extent of the application of the intellectual faculties is central to his metaphysical thesis, and accordingly, he holds that the human intellect lacks the power of intellectual intuition. This limitation leads Kant to conclude that knowledge of objects is possible only if they are given through a faculty distinct from the intellect itself. Assigning a legitimate role to sensibility, he identifies three closely interrelated faculties of the human mind. They are,

(i) sensibility (*Sinnlichkeit*) which conforms our perceptions to human forms of intuition, viz., space and time;

(ii) understanding (*Verstand*) which conforms our individual judgments regarding objects to the categories of thought; and (iii) reason (*Vernunft*) which conforms the collective totality of our judgments regarding objects to certain structural requirements of systematic unity, by regulating the use of the concepts and rules of the understanding, and thus organizing coherent experiences. At the initial level, sensibility is equipped with receptivity and the understanding with spontaneity. Or, it can be expressed in terms of *givenness* and the *consciousness of the given*: "the aspect of having something given to one, and the aspect of making the given intelligible to oneself" (Cassirer, 53). Kant holds that all order and system in nature are due to the mind, and they are classified into two types of concepts. The first kind, space and time, originate in sensibility, and, the other, the categories originate in the understanding. Throughout the *Critique* Kant insists that these concepts are not derived from experience, but experience to be experience at all, it presupposes them: objects must be spatial and temporal, and must possess categorial features. This leads Kant to show that these concepts are pure in nature and *a priori* in

origin.

In the case of sensibility and understanding we find them balancing the operation and validation of each other: experience validating categories, and, in their turn, the categories making experience possible. However, in the case of reason, although it acts on the results of the understanding, it creates no objects, but only postulates theoretical unities. This is an unacceptable procedure according to the Aesthetic and the Analytic. If applied, it is difficult to find anything 'objective' within these ideas of reason, which makes Buchdahl claim that the autonomy of reason "is purchased at a price" (Buchdahl, 171). The stress on the spontaneity and autonomy of reason (and also of understanding, in this case), and the source of the ideas being the same reason indicate that nature is constrained by reason's own determining operation, which is restricted to the parameters of reason itself. The claim that reason has insight only into what it produces can also be looked at from a different, but an *a posteriori* perspective, where it may be said that, perhaps, we gradually learn by postulation and hypotheses to tune our reason according to the inherent structure of nature that is not obvious at all, but is being progressively revealed to us.

The unity of apperception which is so central to the *Critique* is not a unity for its own sake, but a unity that leads to a synthesis of representations, and thus to a unity in experience. All faculties work together with a goal of producing synthetic knowledge, which, for Kant, is *a priori* in origin. He shows that the content of sensible intuition by itself is individual in nature, and the formation of any combination cannot ensue from sensibility itself, but from the activity of the intellect. In transcendental logic, he names this process synthesis, which is so central to give rise to any valid knowledge *a priori*. The spontaneous process of this synthesis is characterized by Kant as one of literally laying hold of, or grasping or gripping together (*begreifen*) all elementary representations of our experience.

Kant's dictum, "thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind" (CPR A51/B75), indicates that left to each of them, they cannot give rise to coherent experience or knowledge. Synthesis is the central and fundamental process that is operative in the activities of experiencing and knowing, starting with perception in which appearances are combined together. Kant chiefly speaks in terms of two different kinds of synthesis: empirical synthesis and transcendental synthesis. Transcendental synthesis is performed by productive imagination through a manifold of pure intuition, while empirical synthesis is performed through perception or representations by reproductive imagination,

where the activity of imagination is identified as understanding: the former results in the objective phenomenal world through the application of categories, and the latter in our knowledge of this phenomenal world.

The upward moving synthesis of various components of knowledge reaches a new level of cohesion and systematic unity in the synthetic activity of the final and ultimate intellectual faculty called reason (*Vernunft*). Armed with transcendental ideas, and the quest for the completion of the systematic knowledge, reason aims at the ultimate level of knowledge possible for us as human beings. Moreover, this positive approach of explicating the nature and functions of reason is overshadowed by the major task of the Dialectic to analyse the transcendental illusions to which reason naturally leads.

Lack of absolute unity in understanding paves the way for necessity of the ideas of pure reason, which are “not arbitrarily invented,” but “are imposed by the very nature of reason itself” (CPR A327/B384). Pure reason operates with its pure concepts, which are otherwise known as “transcendental ideas.” These are derived “from the nature of our reason” (CPR A336/B393); they are “not merely reflected but inferred concepts.” Concepts of the understanding result from a ‘reflection’ on the manifold of appearances, leading to conceptualisation; they are pure or *a priori* because “they contain nothing more than the unity of reflection upon appearances, insofar as these appearances must necessarily belong to a possible empirical consciousness” (CPR A310/B367). Reason, on the other hand, through its pure concepts or ideas, does not merely reflect on the given, rather extends beyond anything that could be given in an act of assembling or *inferring* on which it has to operate. This obviates the fundamental nature of these concepts: their origin itself is in aloofness, and indirectness (through the lack of mediation with intuition) exists in their relation to objects of experience. The concepts of reason, according to Kant, “have, in fact, no relation to any object that could be given as coinciding with them” (CPR A336/B393), whereby Kant brings to the fore their transcendental nature, and calls them “*transcendental ideas*” (CPR A321/B378).

The transcendental ideas of reason are regulative because they direct or regulate the operation of the understanding by leading it to systematic and absolute unity which it cannot achieve by employing its own categories. Three characteristics of regulative principles, which are integral to Kantian employment, are as follows: (i) they lack *constitutive* force; (ii) they have only a *methodological* function; and, finally, (iii) they possess a *transcendental* status. Kant considers the regulative employment of reason to be transcendently valid because it leads both the receptive and spontaneous faculties to their

completion in postulating the ideas of totality and the unconditioned unity.

The system of thought developed in the *Critique* is known as transcendental philosophy, and it deals with the system of necessary conditions of experience. For Kant, those conditions constitute knowledge of what is logically prior to experience, or of “what goes before all experience,” i.e., *a priori*. The characteristic transcendental twist, is reflected in his crucial move from the question “What *is* something?” to “What *do we know* about something without primarily appealing to experience?” Or, in other words, instead of bringing reality into consideration, the purpose of the *Critique* is to explain how knowledge about reality is possible. In his attempt to initiate a transcendental inquiry, Kant’s first concern is “to investigate the possibility of concepts *a priori*” (CPR A65-66/B90-91), by way of determining the sources of knowledge, and their valid application. With regard to these sources, the *a priori* concepts and ideas, it may be said that their transcendental use is possible as long as they are employed as regulative principles in the pursuit of knowledge, while a constitutive application of the same in pursuit of representing absolute realities is transcendent, and, hence, dialectical in nature.

When an inference is made “from transcendental concept of the subject, which contains nothing manifold, to the absolute unity of this subject itself...” (CPR A340/B397-98) it gives rise to transcendental paralogism. In formal logic paralogism is used to designate a formally fallacious syllogism with which one deceives oneself. Along this line Kant defines transcendental syllogism as “one in which there is a transcendental ground, constraining us to draw a formally invalid conclusion” (CPR A341/B399). It is an inevitable illusion, or a self-deception transcendently motivated having its ground in the nature of human reason itself. A paralogism arises when the regulative idea of the self is illegitimately treated as constituting a self-subsistent entity. The indirect, but primary motive involved in the move of rational psychology is to prove the immortality of the soul, by misapplying the categories to the ‘I’ that is given only in inner intuition. Transcendental analysis of the paralogism shows that the fundamental aim of rational psychology cannot be achieved as the pure concept of the self – being completely indeterminate (in apperception) – onto which the categories are applied is empty of content, and, hence, beyond the application of schematised categories. This calls for a disciplining of the theoretical application of reason in the realms which are beyond the access of our human intellectual capabilities.

Further, an antinomy is a pair of mutually contradictory statements, both of which can be

supported by formally valid, though transcendently inconsistent, arguments. The lack of absolute synthetic unity in the operations of sensibility and understanding motivates reason to demand a totality of all conditions. On the part of the understanding, however, it is impossible to go beyond the phenomenal series as it is intrinsically bound to the data of sensibility and its own forms in the categories; hence, in its search for absolute unity reason speculates beyond any possible experience, and finds the unconditioned by negating its categorial restrictions. This standpoint of reason, which may be equated to “God’s point of view” with regard to the phenomenal world, acts in such a way that the complete series of conditions for every conditioned is at hand in the unconditioned. This is termed as a cosmological idea in the *Critique*, in which the totality of the phenomenally given is assumed and accepted by reason to press forward to the absolute unity of the phenomenal world. Such a conflict is caused by the fact that reason seeks a unity which transcends the understanding, and which nevertheless is meant to conform to the conditions of the understanding. In this process reason attempts to employ its ideas which transcend understanding, i.e., beyond the legitimate reaches of categories, which, in turn, results in the generation of the antinomies of reason. Kant identifies four categories the employment of which generates cosmological ideas, and with them antinomies. They are quantity, reality, causality, and necessity. These antinomies express the underlying conflict of reason with itself, the ideas of which are generated by an illicit extension of the categories.

Kant attempts in the *Critique* to solve this – to grant reason its legitimate rule over understanding, by appealing to the transcendental perspective of distinguishing appearance and the thing-in-itself. Taking all the four antinomies together, what Kant has in mind in their resolution is to show the role of transcendental philosophy in attaining the final synthesis of the conflicting positions of rationalism and empiricism in pure reason. Strictly speaking, the principles of the Aesthetic and Analytic are transcended in the Dialectic by introducing the distinction between appearance and thing-in-itself, although the resolution of the antinomies is made possible only by maintaining this distinction. This also indicates the importance of the ideas of reason in critical philosophy, and paves the way for introducing the primacy of practical reason in it. Although antinomies result from the speculative flights of theoretical reason and its conflict with itself and the understanding, their resolution in transcendental philosophy guarantees a continued mutual criticism, which should constantly aid us in furthering our knowledge of the world.

Check Your Progress II

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What do you understand by antinomy?

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12.5 TRANSCENDENTAL FREEDOM

Reason being the autonomous faculty, it “admits of no conditions antecedent to itself” (CPR A554/B582) whereby the conceivability of an intelligible causality of freedom opens its avenues for “the absolute spontaneity of an action” (CPR A448/B476). Theoretical philosophy as enshrined in the Aesthetic and the Analytic considers man as part of the phenomenal world, subjected to the causal sequence of events in space and time. Yet, as an intelligible being, whose self-consciousness makes him aware of his noumenal existence, he can intervene in the causal system of natural events by an act of freedom and begin an original new series, thus initiating a new causality through freedom. It features a spontaneous and intelligent causality of freedom as opposed to receptivity.

This facilitates belief in the freedom of the will, laying the foundation of morality, establishing the subject’s independence (i.e., freedom *from*) and power to legislate for itself (i.e., freedom *to*). However, it must be borne in mind that Kant’s intention “has not been to establish the *reality* of freedom” (CPR A558/B586), but only to show that there involves no contradiction in thinking about freedom in the case of man who is a noumenal agent. Owing to his conviction that yielding to transcendental realism would save “neither nature nor freedom” (CPR A543/B571), Kant’s resolution of the conflict between freedom and determinism is to see the entire domain of natural events as determined by efficient causes, but the *formal* presupposition of free acts as determined by intelligent causes. In this sense we are able to conceive the intelligible character as an explanation of the empirical, but ourselves being unable to conceive an explanation for the same, that is, how does this intelligible operate in relation to the empirical. Our intelligible faculties are such that we can conceive only spatial and temporal relations, and any determinate concept of a non-temporal agency, as called for here by Kant’s explanation, is beyond us, or, in other words, at least, we have no understanding as to how noumenal causality operates with its transcendental freedom.

12.6 THE TRANSCENDENTAL IDEAL FOR SYSTEMATIC UNITY

Reason's search for the unconditioned, the dialectical inference from contingent existence to the existence of a necessary being is an effective drive to advance beyond experience to the transcendental ideal. Reason does not suppose that the ideal, *ens realissimum*, actually exists, but only posits it as the archetype for the complete determination of all other beings. This may be appropriately called the primordial being (*Urwesen*) or *ens originarium*, and having nothing above or beyond it may also be called the highest being, *ens summum*. It is also the *ens entium*, the being of all beings, or the ground of all beings, which in the transcendental sense is God, and the ideal of pure reason. Being the highest and the most perfect being of beings, its nature is further posited: "[This Divine Being] must be omnipotent, in order that the whole of nature and its relation to morality ... may be subject to his will; omniscient, that he may know our innermost sentiments and their moral worth; omnipresent, that he may be immediately present for the satisfying of every need which the highest good demands; eternal, that this harmony of nature and freedom may never fail, etc." (CPR A815/B843). Here it must be borne in mind that what is being considered by Kant is the objective reality of the concept of God, and not the objective reality of God, as it is beyond the critical philosophy to consider it, as God cannot be given in intuition. It is also not necessary to presuppose the existence of a being to correspond to the ideal, but requires only the idea of such a being, so that at one stroke both the limits of reason and the purpose of ultimate unity can be achieved.

Kant insists that the transcendental ideal, or the concept of God can have the valid employment only as a regulative principle of reason; any attempt to employ the same to be constitutive of the existence of God would be dialectical and detrimental to the nature of human reason itself. The only possible proof for the existence of God, for Kant, must use moral premises; his insistence to rule out speculative theology gives way to the possibility of moral theology, and an initial attempt is made in this regard in the "Canon of Pure Reason" (CPR A795/B823ff), which is elaborated in his later ethical works. Kant's analysis of speculative theology, seen positively, consistently protests against a metaphysic which claims to determine the necessary characteristics of the ultimate reality only by the exercise of pure reason, while at the same time, it must be said that his attempt

to deny any reality beyond the employment of categories, and a synthesizing activity of sensibility and understanding, is intrinsically questionable.

The schema of God is only a human way of conceiving the ground of nature, for the purpose of employing our cognitive faculties, in order to arrive at the unified understanding of the world of sensibility and understanding. Therefore, theoretical philosophy, in fact, does not address the question of the belief in the existence of God (it being set apart for moral theology), but deals only about thinking of the world *as if* it were created by God, with a view to purposive unity of nature. Thus, for Kant, God seems to be a mere *device* to superimpose transcendental unity on nature and, thus, to make it systematic, purposive, and intelligible.

12.7 PHENOMENON VS. NOUMENON

Transcendental philosophy is said to have at its basis a perspective on reality that, by necessity, has to oscillate between phenomena and noumena. In his fight against rationalism and empiricism, Kant does squarely meet their fundamental opposition and formulates the transcendental vision of reality in his famous statement “Thoughts without content are empty, intuitions without concepts are blind” (CPR A51/B75). The articulation and application of this vision to the varied realms of experience makes it necessary for Kant to distinguish between approaching reality from two fundamentally different viewpoints of phenomena and noumena. The world of experience or the object of experience given through sensibility and understanding is phenomena, i.e., objects of actual and possible sense experience, the knowledge of which is made possible through the application of the categories. Although Kant denies throughout the *Critique* any knowledge beyond the application of the categories, i.e., any metaphysical knowledge in the dogmatic sense, he does hold that that which appears has something beyond appearance, which he calls noumenon.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1) What is the difference between phenomenon and noumenon?

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12.8 SYNTHETIC *A PRIORI* CHARACTER OF KNOWLEDGE

Assuming that empirical experience is contingent and non-pure in nature, Kant concludes that pure *a priori* principles are indispensable in the process of knowing. If, for example, causality is a concept that we use, not because our experience has a certain character, but because it makes objects of a certain sort, and their relations possible for us, then it has necessity for us; it is what we use to constitute an objective world, and so necessarily relative to our standpoint. It is this necessity and universality, and the objective sufficiency ensuing from them that constitute the certainty associated with *a priori* in the *Critique*. All synthetic *a priori* propositions for Kant rest on the structure of the human mind, which, as he *believes*, has the basic function of synthesising what is given in sense experience; this is a process of ordering the given according to the forms of perception (space and time) and the categories of thinking, both of them being the contributions of the mind. Given this structure of the mind, it can formulate concepts and statements, which are synthetic (ampliative) and *a priori* (in advance to sense experience) in relation to the forms of thought. Kant's thrust on the synthetic *a priori* is motivated by his ultimate aim of transcendental philosophy, namely, establishing the *a priori* and unchanging elements of morality.

12.9 LET US SUM UP

Thus, Kant's search for absolute certainty, in terms of necessity and universality of the *a priori* knowledge that the *Critique* aims at achieving, results from a perspective which is ultimately possible only for God, the reality of which itself is an unknowable according to the critical philosophy. It is, then, either contradictory, or simply impossible. In spite of the validating reference to possible experience, it is a perspective of gaining unbounded knowledge of reality, which is beyond the prowess of human beings. Transcendental claim of having *a priori* principles in order to make experience possible is to put the cart before the horse; the claim of purity and certainty being necessarily and universally part of the synthetic *a priori* is to begin philosophising upon something that which is not present at all. Finally, to quote from the *Critique* itself, "transcendental ... is ... necessarily unknown to me" (CPR A496/B524). Hence, there is a need to look further among the Kantian *Critiques*, especially in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, how the critical philosophy conceives an answer to its unresolved issues from the perspective of practical philosophy and into the *Critique of Judgment* to see how the most fundamental process of synthesis is

effected in the human processes of knowing.

12.10 KEY WORDS

A Posteriori and Priori: The terms *a priori* ("prior to") and *a posteriori* ("subsequent to") are used to distinguish two types of knowledge, justifications or arguments. *A priori* knowledge or justification is independent of experience (for example 'All bachelors are unmarried'); *a posteriori* knowledge or justification is dependent on experience or empirical evidence (for example 'Some bachelors are very happy').

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12.12 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1. Kant claims that "the word 'transcendental' ... does not signify something passing beyond all experience but something that indeed precedes it *a priori*, but that is intended to make cognition of experience possible" (*Prolegomena*, Appendix, Ak. 4:373n). It is in this sense that he calls his philosophy transcendental.

Check Your Progress II

1. An antinomy is a pair of mutually contradictory statements, both of which can be supported by formally valid, though transcendently inconsistent, arguments. The lack of absolute synthetic unity in the operations of sensibility and understanding motivates reason to demand a totality of all conditions.

Check Your Progress III

1. The world of experience or the object of experience given through sensibility and understanding is phenomena, i.e., objects of actual and possible sense experience, the knowledge of which is made possible through the application of the categories. Although

Kant denies throughout the *Critique* any knowledge beyond the application of the categories, i.e., any metaphysical knowledge in the dogmatic sense, he does hold that that which appears has something beyond appearance, which he calls noumenon.



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Structure

13.0 Objectives

13.1 Introduction

13.2 Life

13.3 Hegel & His Predecessors

13.4 Some Key Concepts in Hegel's Thought:

13.5 Let Us Sum Up

13.6 Key Words

13.7 Further Readings and References

13.8 Answers to Check Your Progress

13.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are,

- to understand the Significance of a Study of Hegel
- to elucidate Hegel's Views on Philosophy
- to locate Hegel in a History of Ideas
- to understand Hegel from the Perspective of Antecedent Philosophical Traditions
- to understand Hegel's notion of Absolute Knowledge, Hegel's Dialectical Method, Hegel's idea of Master- Slave Relationship

13.1 INTRODUCTION

Many philosophical movements on the Continent in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, such as Existentialism and Marxism, as also the principal preoccupations of the analytic philosophers, can be seen as critical responses to Hegel. Contrariwise, Hegel can be perceived as having proposed resolutions to many prevalent problematic philosophical positions, such as an immaculate Cartesian subject irretrievably distant from the world, an exaggerated liberalism that threatened communities, and a dogmatic materialism. In the

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Preface to *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel likens philosophy to “the owl of Minerva”, the goddess of wisdom, who, however, is sighted only at dusk, *after* the events of the day, for only then can philosophy acquire the material for reflection, and fulfil its role as “the thought of the world.”*

Hegel has had an unenviable reputation as a Prussian reactionary, more damningly, as the intellectual forerunner of militarism and Nazism in Germany. Karl Marx, in *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* dismissed, what he called Hegel’s merely idealistic, theoretical understanding of reality.† We need to ascertain the truth of these accusations, in the process offering an elucidation of some of those key concepts that Hegel employed in his thought.

13.2 LIFE

George Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel was born in 1770 in Stuttgart, Germany. He attended the *Gymnasium* from 1776-1788, then enrolled for a Master of Philosophy at the University of Tübingen. Hegel and his generation were legatees of a turbulent history of the Continent. The storming of the Bastille took place in France in 1789, signaling the commencement of the French Revolution. The upheavals in France reverberated across Europe, resonating specially with Germans as they attempted to put up with the authoritarianism of their princes. The revolution, though being waged in France, held the promise of change and renewal. The next seven years saw Hegel become a house tutor for five years, followed by his shift to Frankfurt. This was an extraordinarily fecund phase in Hegel’s life.

Contemporary political issues, economics, religion, history and theology engrossed him completely.

It is in the Frankfurt years that Hegel first articulated his urge to work out a philosophical system. Philosophy, for him, is the widest context in which our thoughts on society, religion and politics are systematically presented. Here it is worthwhile to cite from Frederick Beiser, a celebrated scholar on Hegel. He observes, “We live in such a specialized and pluralistic age that no one expects to see the restoration of wholeness, the recovery of unity with ourselves, others and nature; but these were the grand ideals behind Hegel’s philosophy.” ‡

* Hegel, G.W.F., *Phenomenology of Spirit (PS)*, Trans A.V. Miller, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1977, Preface, P.1.

† Marx, Karl, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, First Published: 1959, Trans. Martin Miligan, 2009.

‡ Beiser, Frederick, Routledge, London, 2005, P.1.

Spinoza, whom Hegel had studied closely, and his pantheistic monism, held a definitive appeal for him. 1806 saw the completion of *Phenomenology of Spirit (PS)* a singularly important milestone in Hegel's academic output. *Science of Logic* was published in two volumes in 1812 and 1813. In 1817 Hegel brought out the *Encyclopedia of Philosophical Sciences*. He was appointed a Professor of Philosophy at the University of Berlin in 1818, where he remained till his death in 1831, of cholera.

13.3 HEGEL AND HIS PREDECESSORS

In a sense radicalism of every denomination, whether Cartesian, Kantian, phenomenological or existentialist, can never be path-breaking, it must be located in a history of ideas. Traditions appearing to be obsolete, from chronologically later perspectives, furnish nonetheless, the material and the broad framework for debates in an idiom that appears to certainly possess the gloss of novelty, but is the outcome of a critical engagement with some prevalent thought or the other. Let us illustrate this point.

13.3.1 On Descartes

Descartes' mind-body dualism rested on a humanist premise— it is my thinking that discloses my essential personality. The phrase *cogito, ergo sum* was employed by him to express this newly- awakened optimism: truth is a *human* prerogative, accessible to disciplined thought, not, as in earlier times, an ecclesiastic privilege.

This dichotomy was repudiated by Hegel who argued for the inescapable embodiment of the subject. Reluctant to essentialize thinking as the *only* feature of the *cogito*, Hegel stressed that it is also an *expressive* being. He would go on to highlight the gradual unraveling of reality, there is no instantaneous flash that precedes this revelation. According to Hegel, the *cogito/* subject is constantly engaged in combating lesser forms of consciousness, such as impulses or inclinations. Far from being a cohesive, integrated unit which it appeared to be in *Meditations*, consciousness, for Hegel, is internally fragmented. However, these divisions are continuously being reconciled in higher modes of consciousness. The point is that unlike Descartes, knowledge or certitude does not get disclosed to us in a lightening flash; Hegel would delineate an entire “dialectical” journey that is undertaken by consciousness before the terminus is reached. I shall presently clarify the dialectical method as it occurs in Hegel's thought.

13.3.2 On Kant

Hegel's critique of Enlightenment is also, simultaneously, his criticism of Kant. He interrogated Enlightenment because of its rationalist and individualist ideology. The Enlightenment was a movement in Europe which began in England in the seventeenth century, spread thence to America and France one hundred years later, and was evidenced in Germany in the eighteenth century. Hume, Voltaire, Rousseau and Kant were its important representatives. Celebrating reason, specifically scientific rationality as exemplified in Isaac Newton, Enlightenment drew upon the notion of a world that was the site for the enactment of human agency.

Hegel had multiple issues with the Enlightenment, the principal one being the dualistic fragmentation of the self that was integral to scientific rationality, a hallmark of Enlightenment. Secondly, he was opposed to the intellectual basis of the Social Contract theorists who belonged to this period, that perceived people as inherently selfish. Finally, he was disinclined to look at nature as a mechanism, which emanated from Enlightenment.

Where Kant had viewed Understanding as a consummate faculty, Hegel perceived it as evolving as it engages with prevalent theories and certitudes. In general, philosophy is a continuous engagement with contesting ideas. This is a belief that Hegel inherited from the Greeks. For instance, Plato's writings were found to be in the form of "dialogues," a refreshingly novel medium for our otherwise complex philosophical discussions. Rather than employ abstruse vocabulary and complex argumentation, Platonic discussants resolve major issues in metaphysics, epistemology and politics in *conversation*. Various points of views are exchanged in these dialogues by the participants, subjected to cross-questioning (*elenchus*), and accepted or demolished according to the relative strength of the live defense by the proponents of aforementioned views. The substantial point being made here by Hegel is that "understanding" does not connote a *fixed* quantity (for example, twelve categories of the Understanding that was the Kantian view), rather, it grows, and becomes more "aggregative" as it moves along.

Hegel criticized the faculty view of consciousness that emerged from Kantian ethics. He rejected a morality of formal principles, or a morality that based itself on a passion-reason conflict. Kant defaulted in his conception of morality because he endeavored to sift feelings and inclinations from the rational principle of duty. As contrasted to this Hegel emphasized an intersubjective dimension of morality, a life of customs and conventions lived with others.

13.4 SOME KEY CONCEPTS IN HEGEL'S THOUGHT

13.4.1 The Dialectical Method

Human life for Hegel was not static and inviolate, but he viewed it as historical and developmental. Philosophy is constantly negotiating contrary ideas, perceiving each idea as a fragment of truth at best, thus mandating us to continue our search for truth as undivided and entire. This negative activity of thought has been called “dialectical” by Hegel. Interestingly, consciousness is conceptualized as itinerant, or as a journeying consciousness. It traverses various stages— perception, self-consciousness, reason, and finally, Spirit. This movement is called “dialectical.” It has three major milestones, *thesis* or an idea or thought, its *antithesis*, or its criticism, and, finally, the *synthesis*, which is a repudiation of the faultiness in different worldviews, while retaining the perceived strengths in each.

Let us illustrate this method. Suppose we live in a democracy where there is guaranteed freedom of the press. Let us call this stage a *thesis*. Over a period of time this license given to the press is bound to be abused in some quarters, the press may publish material that is inflammatory in nature, or, employing abusive language towards a particular caste, community or a religious minority, thus mandating a review. It is not unrealistic to expect a reactionary response by the authorities towards this law, resulting in an unmitigated censorship of the press. Strict surveillance may be mounted on editorials of various dailies, the Censor Board of the country may be armed with plenipotentiary authority to disallow a perceived transgression, etc. This is called *antithesis*. In the altered political scenario subsequent to the ban on the freedom of the press, there is bound to be considerable civic disgruntlement and frustration, leading on to the final stage, namely, *synthesis*. This stage will display a cautious rejection of the fault-lines in the thesis and the antithesis, while simultaneously incorporating into policy the cogent positions from each. Translated into law, this might entail some deliberated restrictions on the freedom of the press. Thus, freedom of the press gets restored, albeit with some in-built conditions.

What this example proves is that reason as a critical force will question customs, prevalent notions of morality, superstitions, and the prevailing political and religious institutions.

PONDER BOX-I

- The Dialectical Method seems to be an interesting way to understanding historical happenings. Would you like to try applying it to any part of history that you are familiar with?
- Do you think that the “synthesis” is a terminal point after which all movement halts? Does it work like this in human history?

However, and this is significant in Hegel's thought, reason can never play an *annihilative* role towards these, else we shall be confronted with the *totalitarianism* of reason, which is not acceptable. The larger point being made by Hegel is that all ideas/theses must be taken on board, analyzed, but not destroyed. The truth in each thesis or antithesis must be preserved before newer forms of thought and institutions are established.

13.4.2 Spirit

Hegel gave a special place to history in philosophy. The movement guiding history is rational. The history being referred to here is cosmic, it is not specific to a particular society or individual. Does history in this collective sense have a telos? In the *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* Hegel observes, "Everything that from eternity has happened in heaven and earth, the life of God and all the deeds of time are simply the struggles of Spirit to know itself and to find itself."*

It is evident that the Spirit is not an accomplished force, it is evolving. Here Spirit does not have the Cartesian connotations of an individualized consciousness. Hegel laments about the modern, truncated subject, contrasting it to the Greek citizens inhabiting the city-states during ancient times. The Socratic dictum *know thyself* has been appropriated by Hegel to castigate the culture of self-knowledge acquired in the interiority of one's subjectivity. He wishes us rather to reorient our goals and pursue human reality or Spirit.

The telos that is the driver of history is the Spirit's endeavor to advance from potentiality to actuality. I have already observed that Spirit in Hegel is not an individual, finite consciousness, but as universal. According to Hegel, "Spirit's intelligent comprehension of itself is at the same time the progression of the total evolving reality. This progression is not one that takes its course through the thought of an individual and exhibits itself in a single consciousness, for it shows itself in the history of the world in all the richness of its form."†

Check Your Progress I

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

POUNDER BOX-II

The concept of the Spirit has humanistic connotations in Hegel's thought.

Do you think the "humanity" therein being talked about is universal? Or, is there a Eurocentric bias in Hegel?

* *Lectures on the History of Philosophy*, trans E.S. Haldane & F.H. Simpson, 1966, P.23.

† *PS*, P. 111.

1. Discuss the Dialectical Method in Hegel’s philosophy. Give examples.

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2. How is the notion of the Spirit in Hegel different from:

- a. Descartes’ Cogito
- b. The Self in Kant?

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13.4.3 Religion

Among the contemporary philosophers who exercised an enormous influence on Hegel were Friedrich Schelling and Friedrich Holderlin. They were his roommates at the University. Hegel studied major philosophical works with them. Rousseau, a celebrated French thinker, particularly captured the imagination of this group of young men. From Rousseau Hegel derived the inspiration to launch a trenchant attack on the traditional Judeo-Christian notion of a transcendent God. Hegel’s argument was that a transcendent God would undermine human autonomy. This proposition was to become a major tenet in a movement that began in Europe in the nineteenth century, and acquired the dimensions of a “cult” in the twentieth century. This movement was called existentialism. Running down what Hegel called an “objective” religion, he advocated a “natural” faith. Where objective religion was theoretical and doctrinal, natural religion derived from the demands of morality and practical religion. He believed that a morality supported by Christian faith was elitist in character, it could never assume the character of a mass morality. Only a natural religion, one founded on *reason* and not on authority (such as was evidenced in Christianity), could support a practical morality.

13.4.4 Absolute Truth/Knowledge

Kant had famously asserted the complementarity of concepts-percepts in the acquisition of knowledge. Hegel perceived this thesis to imply, not what is true of an individual self, but the constitution or the structuration of the world of objects by consciousness *in general*. Through

PONDER BOX-III

The notion of a knowledge that is universal, a truth that is complete, do try to engage with this idea in your mind and see what all knowledges you could put together.

a shared culture, especially by virtue of a common language, we construct the world, striving always for intersubjective agreement. Obviously, the concepts in terms of which coherence is put into the world are peculiar to different folk groups and tribes. But Hegel emphasizes the collective nature of the truth or knowledge. Thus, the reader must make a note of this: truth arises amidst us from multiple perspectives, there is a complete relativity of what we evaluate as worthwhile, or what we shun from doing; Hegel's point is that we must overcome these diverse perceptions and strive for a consensus. Here it is pertinent to quote Robert Solomon, "The most obvious and important historical predecessor of Hegel's spirit is Rousseau's General Will, coupled with suggestions of the Christian concepts of the 'Holy Spirit' and 'communion', but philosophically the most immediate predecessors are Kant's abstract notion of 'Humanity', and the French slogan of 'fraternity'."*

In a concrete and tangible way Schilling had anticipated Hegel when, in 1790s, he talked about a "living universe", one which displayed the notion of an integrated unity of nature, history and religion, manifesting itself as an absolute ego that became a palpable force inspiring all human beings to realize it. Hegel built on this insight, extrapolating the dialectic movement of thought and applying it to the fields of human history. He also attempted to make Truth more inclusive by incorporating into itself nature, science, ethics, religion and art. In every area of life truth becomes larger and larger as it is confronted by opposing ideas and criticisms. This continual self-defense finally takes it in the direction of becoming a consummate force. This unqualified identity is the Spirit. It lends to the entirety of the world as a unity.

In a move reminiscent of the ancient Greeks, Hegel's Spirit symbolizes an undivided spiritual community, the individual, much like its counterpart in a typical Greek city-state, is rendered subservient to this universal Spirit/ the State. An extremely important formative influence on Hegel was also that of the Romantic movement. This latter was a cultural protest against the reductive conception of reason, evidenced in Enlightenment. Reason in this sense privileged the universal over the particular, the objective over the subjective, and perceived nature as subservient to human purpose. The Romantics repudiated this centrality being awarded to a scientific rationality. Hegel's absolute idealism, an organic conception of nature, and a communitarian ideology were, in considerable measure, a Romantic legacy.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

* Solomon, Robert.C., *Continental Philosophy Since 1750*, Oxford University Press, 1988, P.1.

1. Examine the concept of Absolute Knowledge as Hegel understood it.

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13.4.5 Metaphysics

Hegel regarded metaphysics as foundational to philosophy. Many of his successors endeavored to read metaphysics “out” of his thought, nudging him in the direction of a social epistemology. This exegetical license has been questioned by well-known Hegelian scholars such as Jurist, Solomon and Sinnebrink.* For Hegel metaphysical queries were inescapable. Kant had castigated metaphysics because of its preoccupations with the realm of the transcendent. Hegel perceived the task of philosophy to be the pursuit of the Absolute. However, as we have already observed, for Hegel the Absolute does not transgress the boundaries of the finite world, but is immanent in the particular.

Beiser has given to us a reading of metaphysics in Hegel that does not see it as engaged only with transcendent entities.† The Absolute (or the Universal) according to this version, becomes manifest *only* through the particular or the individual. Critics of Hegel have misread the *logical* priority of the universal as an *ontological* priority. Hegel is not a Platonist who hypostatizes the Absolute in a segregated, other world. Following Aristotle Hegel believes that universals exist only in particulars, akin to the forms animating the objects. It is in Aristotle, rather than in Plato, that the germs of an absolute idealism, attributed to Hegel, are to be found. Scholars have mistakenly seen in Spinoza’s monism an anticipation of an absolute idealist position that is evidenced in Hegel. The forms inherent in particulars are, in an Aristotelian sense, the *formal-final* causes of things.

Let me give an example of this dual causality to understand Aristotle, and by implication, Hegel better. If we take up any piece of music, vocal or instrumental, its *formal* cause is its essential nature, how it is sung/played. Its *final* cause is that which impels the musician to play it, the *purpose* that is sought in its creation, whether it is to entertain, or to arouse an emotion, or to lodge a protest against a policy or decree of the government.

* Jurist, E.L., *Beyond Hegel and Nietzsche: Philosophy, Culture and Agency*, The MIT Press, U.S.A., 2000

Solomon, Robert, *Continental Philosophy Since 1750...*

Sinnebrink, Robert, *Understanding Hegelianism*, Acumen, London, 2007.

† Beiser, Ibid.,195.

The *final* cause coverts into a teleological worldview at the hands of Hegel. To believe that an idea or form animates every object is to affirm that everything aspires to realize the idea. This is the substantive thesis of objective idealism. It is not allotting privilege to the concept of a mind or an intentionality that has awarded reason to the world of objects. Rather, the rational design that governs the world is a form or a structure inherent in the world. The world as an entity independent of consciousness is never contested by Hegel.

Schelling and Holderlin deeply influenced Hegel in conceptualizing a reality as primarily non-dualistic, thus questioning the spectatorial image of mind versus nature in the Cartesian manner. In the *Preface to PS* Hegel clearly states his metaphysical views. He writes,

“The bud disappears in the bursting-forth of the blossom and one might say that the former is refuted by the latter; similarly, when the fruit appears, the blossom is shown up in its turn as false manifestation of the plant, and the fruit now emerges as the Truth of it instead. These forms ...are moments of an organic unity in which they not only do not conflict, but in which each is as necessary as the other, and this mutual necessity alone constitutes the life of the whole.”*

13.4.6 Master and Slave

In an insightful remark Jurist says, “The move from consciousness to *Geist* in *Phenomenology of Spirit* testifies to the limitations of a monadological subjectivity, divorced from culture as it appears to be.”† This view that absolutely everything in the human world is a product not of nature but of culture was a unique insight an philosophy that came to us from Hegel. Hegel was unhappy with the state-of-nature Social Contract theorists. The latter clearly grounded themselves on a state-of-nature where isolated individuals, finding that human nature is nasty and egoistic, decide to come together to form a social covenant (Hobbes). A legacy of the Enlightenment was a passionate pursuit of autonomy. Even Rousseau celebrated the pre-social individual in the state of nature as ‘born free and happy’.

Of course he went on ultimately to propose the social contract theory, but the presumptions from which the theory arose were those of a man who was deeply suspicious of civilization.

Ponder Box IV

Try and see how you would apply the Master- Slave conflict in a concrete instance of your choice.

* *PS*, P.2.

† Jurist, E.L. *Ibid.*, P.29.

Contesting this individualism Hegel advances a *social* notion of humanity. Placed in an interpersonal context rather than an intuitive, private one, self-consciousness is conceived as a *developing* subject. Opposing Descartes Hegel perceives self-certitude as a futile acquisition. Chapter IV of *PS* is called “*Independence and Dependence of Self-consciousness: Lordship and Bondage*”. The chapter unfolds as a tale of two self-consciousness’s that encounter each other and immediately, a combat begins between them to attempt the mutual subordination of the other. Each self attempts to establish its supremacy over the other. However, the annihilation of the other is not sought, the other’s subjugation is the goal in this war. A victorious consciousness needs to be acknowledged by a lesser one, so the victor lets the vanquished live. Thus is the nomenclature of Master-Slave introduced by Hegel.

Although the Master grants the Slave its life, he does not acknowledge the Slave as a rational center, equal to himself. As the parable unfolds the reader finds the Slave’s complete objectification. The Slave must look after the Master and attend to all his needs. A life of drudgery for the Slave is contrasted to the comfortably ensconced life of the Master. The climax comes when the Master is shown as slavishly dependent on the Slave, while the Slave, recognizing this, becomes confident. The Master’s access to the object-world is through the mediation of the Slave who toils continuously so that the Master may be served. Paradoxically, it is this very service rendered to the Master, hitherto a symbol of his bondage, that becomes an enabling condition of the Slave’s freedom. In mastering nature the Slave gets progressively emancipated from his slavish mentality. The Master, on the other hand, remains a consumer at best, recognition of his authority has certainly come to him, but only by an “inferior” consciousness.”

It is not difficult to understand why this section on Master-Slave was perceived by a well-known scholar of Hegel called Alexandre Kojève, a Russian émigré to France, as suggesting the transformational potential in every experience of oppression. Commenting on this “prejudiced” reading Robert Sinnebrink says, “ Kojève’s ‘explosion’ of Hegel’s texts is generated by his idiosyncratic combination of Marxist and Heideggerian themes, which together gave his reading of Hegel’s master-slave dialectic both revolutionary and existential dimensions.”*

13.4.7 Ethics

*Sinnebrink, Robert, *Ibid.*, PP. 136-137.

Hegel's ethical position seems to have got formulated as he tried understanding Kant's theory of morality. He found that implicit in Kantian theory were two irreconcilable divisions; one, between a human being and a transcendent God, and the second, between reason and inclinations. Hegel observed that these disharmonies were, by no means, original to Kant. They were the key tenets of Christian morality, and Kant had uncritically accepted them. I have already shown how the notion of a transcendent God would undermine human autonomy. Now, coming to the second division, Hegel believes that this would render morality impossible. A morality of formal principles that disregards passions cannot give us an ethical theory. Moreover, the divide between reason and passions is an internal one, personal to the subject who is experiencing it. It cannot be construed as a generalized thesis. Reason independently of passions is lifeless. Hegel sides with the Romantic's condemnation of any demeaning of passions.

For Hegel, the basis of ethics was a community. He coined a term called *Sittlichkeit* in German. This notion rebutted a morality for all times, invariant and universal. *Sittlichkeit* brings together reason and customs. In *The Philosophy of the Right* and *Lectures on the Philosophy of History* Hegel takes ethics to new heights as he talks about an enlarged human community, a vision of the Spirit that encircles us all, overcoming all divisions.

1. What are those elements in Hegel's thought that lend themselves to:
 - a. an Existentialist interpretation;
 - b. a Marxist interpretation

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What are those elements in Hegel's thought that lend themselves to:
 - a. an Existentialist interpretation ;
 - b. a Marxist interpretation

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2. What is the goal that Hegel sets for himself when he undertakes to study Philosophy?

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13.5 LET US SUM UP

G.W.F. Hegel (1770-1831) was a German philosopher. His first book, published in 1807, was called *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The principal ideas of his philosophy are found in this work.

According to him, philosophy is a unificatory enterprise, bringing together material from religion, science, ethics, art and history.

The idea of philosophy as a progression, a key insight in Hegel, was borrowed from biology. He presented to the reader a teleological conception of philosophy, the goal or telos being variously described in his thought as Absolute Truth/Knowledge/Spirit. The odyssey of the Spirit is found in *PS*, this journey being “dialectical”. Conflicting ideas are taken up for discussion, each representing only a partial view, but none can be straight-forwardly rejected. The Spirit is not a solitary consciousness. It is not, in the manner of Descartes, acquired in introspection. The Master-Slave section in *PS* demonstrates the interpersonal dimension of human experience.

13.6 Key Words

Absolute Knowledge/Truth: Is an all-embracing perspective on everything—psychology, art, science, ethics and religion.

Also, a consummate stage where surrendering our individuality, we perceive ourselves as a moral community.

Consciousness: It is not a cohesive, integrated self as it had been for the rationalists, but internally fragmented. Hegel has spoken of a journeying consciousness as it goes through elementary forms to more sophisticated ones.

Dialectical Method: There are inadequacies in any point of view, these are overcome over a period of time, and a new point of view, opposed to the first may appear. Contestations pertaining to the second view arise, leading to a third stage that is a synthesis of the positive features of both the first and the second points of view.

Philosophy: In Hegel’s thought philosophy brings together our thoughts on society, religion and politics, and presents them in a systematic fashion.

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Web-links

- https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Georg_Wilhelm_Friedrich_Hegel
- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel/>
- <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/hegel-dialectics/>
- <https://philpapers.org/browse/g-w-f-hegel>
- <https://iep.utm.edu/hegelsoc/>

14.7 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

(Guideposts to Answers. Learners are advised to substantiate their answers by using their own illustrations and examples, wherever applicable.)

Check Your Progress I

1.

- A dynamic view of society as opposed to a stationary one.
- Progress takes the form of contestation and conflict.
- The “contested” is never eliminated, but retained partially.

Think up concrete examples and apply this insight. Examples given in the study- material.

2.

- Hegel rejected the idea of a self attained in introspection.
- The self in *PS* arises through mutual recognition in a social space.
- Spirit in Hegel is an overcoming of the Cartesian dualism, it is an all-embracing cosmic force that envelopes us all and nature as well.
- The Spirit, unlike the self in Kant, is not transcendently located. It is an immanent force.
- The Spirit is not, in the manner of a Kantian self, a unifier of an individual’s experiences. It is a cosmic force.

- Kant's system of Categories is timeless, Hegel would emphasize the fluid nature of Categories, as well as insist that they cannot be numerically restricted to being just twelve.

Check Your Progress II

1.

- Hegel looked back to a history of philosophy, and perceived it as a progression, as an attempt to overcome various divisions that had entered our worldviews.
- Each Truth contributed by an individual or a perspective is partial at best.
- The Absolute is the awareness of something that is much larger than our parochial perceptions on knowledge and truth.
- *PS* is intended to introduce the standpoint of Absolute Knowledge, and present it in a systematic manner.

Check Your Progress III

1. The dialectical method would have appealed to both the Existentialist and the Marxist. Contesting, rather than straight-forwardly accepting, is key to both these traditions. While the Existentialist rebels against social, moral and religious truths handed down to us by tradition, the Marxist militates against a socio-economic order in society that is inequitable.

2.

- Hegel has conceived philosophy in universalist terms.
- Undertakes an evaluation of diverse philosophies in an effort to extract truth.
- Hegel was influenced by Kant, Schelling and Holderlin.
- To arrive at Truth which is complete is the goal of philosophy.

UNIT 14 MARX*

Structure

- 14.0 Objectives
- 14.1 Introduction
- 14.2 Historical Background
- 14.3 Historical Materialism
- 14.4 Class and Class Struggle
- 14.5 Alienation.
- 14.6 Alienated Labour
- 14.7 Communism
- 14.8 Let Us Sum Up
- 14.9 Further Readings and References
- 14.10 Answers to Check Your Progress

14.0 OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this unit are,

- to introduce the learner to the thoughts of Karl Marx.
- to make the learner familiar with his life and works, the historical factors that moulded his thought process, and the main aspects of his philosophy.
- to make the learner capable of reflecting on the political and economic system envisaged by Marx, in the context of contemporary socio-economic and political realities.

14.1 INTRODUCTION

Karl Heinrich Marx was born into a comfortable middle-class Jewish family in Trier, Germany on May 5, 1818. His father Hirschel Marx was a lawyer. Before Karl's birth, he decided to abandon his Jewish faith and become a Christian to escape anti-Semitism. After finishing his schooling in Trier, Karl Marx entered Bonn University to study law.

* Dr. Josh Alampasari, Satyaliyama, Chennai. (This unit is a revised version of the unit titled "Karl Marx" of BPY-009).

Later, Marx joined Berlin University and changed his subject of specialization from law to philosophy. Here, Marx came under the influence of the philosophy of G. W. F. Hegel, who had been a professor of philosophy at Berlin, until his death in 1831. Marx became a member of the Young Hegelian movement, a group, which included Bruno Bauer, David Strauss and others who were involved in a radical critique of Christianity, and the Prussian autocracy. After obtaining his doctorate from the University of Jena, Marx hoped to get a teaching post. However, his radical political views and association with the Young Hegelian movement made it impossible.

Marx took to journalism to make a living and moved to Cologne and there the *Rheinische Zeitung* published an article by him in which he defended the freedom of the press. Marx immigrated to France, arriving in Paris at the end of 1843; Marx rapidly made contact with organized groups of emigrant German workers and with various sects of French socialists. He also edited the short-lived *Deutsch-Französische Jahrbucher* which was intended to bridge French socialism and the German radical Hegelianism. During his first few months in Paris, Marx set down his views in a series of writings which later came to be known as *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844). It was also in Paris that Marx developed his lifelong partnership with Friedrich Engels (1820-1895). While working on their first book together, *The Holy Family*, the French government expelled Marx from the country, and Marx moved to Brussels where he remained for the next three years. While in Brussels, Marx devoted himself to an intensive study of history, and elaborated what came to be known as the materialist conception of history, which was later published as *The German Ideology*. At the same time, Marx also wrote a polemic *The Poverty of Philosophy* against the idealistic socialism of the French socialist thinker J.P Proudhon. In 1847, a meeting of the Communist League's Central Committee was held in London, and Marx attended this meeting. After returning to Brussels at the request of the Central committee, he wrote *The Communist Manifesto*.

Early in 1848 Marx moved back to Paris, where a revolt against King Louis Philippe, who was forced to abdicate, was on. Slowly the revolution reached Germany. On the outbreak of disturbances in Germany, Marx went to Cologne. However, the summer of 1848 brought the first reaction of counter revolution and the revolutionary movements were suppressed. Finally, Marx settled down in London in May 1849, to begin the "long, sleepless night of exile" that was to last for the rest of his life. He wrote two lengthy pamphlets on the 1848

revolution in France and its aftermath, *The Class Struggle in France* and *The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*. During the first half of the 1850s the Marx family lived in poverty in the Soho quarter of London. Marx and Jenny already had four children, and two more were to follow. Of these only three survived. Marx's major source of income at this time was the help from Engels. From 1852 Marx wrote a series of articles in *New York Daily Tribune* and also contributed to *New American Cyclopaedia*. In London Marx spent a lot of time in the British Museum reading books and journals that would help him analyze the capitalist society. By 1857 he had produced a gigantic 800-page manuscript on capital, landed property, wage labour, the state, foreign trade and the world market, *The Grundrisse* (Outlines). Marx published *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* in 1859. In the early 1860s, he composed three large volumes, *Theories of Surplus Value*, which discussed various theoreticians of political economy. It was not until 1867 that Marx was able to publish volume I of *The Capital*. Volumes II and III were finished during the 1860s but were published posthumously by Engels.

Marx was elected to the General Council of the First International in 1864. During the last decade of his life though Marx's health declined, he managed to comment on contemporary politics in his *Critique of The Gotha Programme*. In his correspondence with Vera Zasulich, Marx contemplated the possibility of Russia bypassing the capitalist stage of development and building communism on the basis of the existing peasant cooperatives. The deaths of his eldest daughter, and his wife clouded the last years of Marx's life. He died on March 14, 1883 and was buried at Highgate Cemetery in London.

Check Your Progress I

- Note:** a) Use the space provided for your answer.
b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit.

1. What is the importance of Marx today?

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2. What is the importance of Marx's life for his theory and praxis?

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3. What are some of the important works of Karl Marx?
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14.2 HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Marxism could be considered the continuation and culmination of German classical philosophy, French Socialism and British (Capitalist) Economics. To gain an understanding of Marx’s philosophy and the socialist praxis he advocated, it is necessary that we look into each of these fields of knowledge that formed the historical and academic background to Marx’s thought.

14.2.1 Classical German Philosophy

Hegel was one of the most important philosophers of the time, and he believed that reality was Spirit, and that the human being is Spirit alienated from its objects and from itself. He believed that this alienation can be overcome by knowledge, knowledge that there is nothing in the object which was not put there by the subject Spirit itself. During his university days, Marx became a member of a radical left-wing group, the Young Hegelians. Marx accepted Hegel’s dialectic, but for him history was not the dialectical manifestation of the Spirit, but men and women transforming the world through the creation of their means of existence. He drifted away from the Young Hegelian movement and expressed his disagreements with their ideology in *The Holy Family*, the *Theses on Feuerbach* and *The German Ideology*. *The Theses on Feuerbach* contain one of Marx's most memorable remarks: “The philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point is to change it.” (Thesis 11) Materialism of the time ignored the active role of the human subject in creating the world we perceive. Idealism as developed by Hegel, understood the active nature of the human subject, but confined it to thought or contemplation. Marx combined the insights of both the traditions, to propose a view in which human beings transform the world they find themselves in. This transformation happens not in thought but in reality, through actual

material activity. This historical version of materialism is the foundation of Marx's theory of history; it was derived from his reflection on the history of philosophy, his experience of social and economic realities of the time, and his encounter with the working class.

14.2.2 Socialism

G.D.H. Cole in the first volume of his *History of Socialist Thought* says that the word "socialist" was first used in 1827 in the Owenite Co-operative magazine as a general description of Robert Owen's co-operative doctrines, and then as "socialisme" in 1832 in *La Globe*. The general connotation of the word in 1830s was a system of society that stressed the social against the individual, the co-operative against the competitive, sociability against individual self-sufficiency; and social control on the accumulation and use of private property. Louis Blanqui, Fourier, Robert Owen etcetera advocated different versions of socialism. Marxism emerged as a critique and revolutionary transformation of the different schools of socialist thought and the movements of political emancipation.

14.2.3 Capitalist Economics

Capitalism is an economic theory which stresses that the means of production should be owned by private individuals. Capitalists believe that private ownership and free enterprise will lead to more efficiency, lower prices, and better products. Adam Smith believed that an individual, by pursuing his/her own interest, frequently promotes the interests of the society more efficiently than when one intends to promote it. According to capitalist thinking, enlightened self-interest, and competition in the free market would benefit society as a whole by keeping prices low, while providing incentive for the production of a wide variety of goods and services. Capitalist mode of production advocated the division of labour, which it believed would contribute to an increase in production. Modern capitalism had created unprecedented wealth. Capitalism could not exist without constantly revolutionizing the means of production. However, the system made the workers, the real producers of wealth alienated and poorer, the more they worked the less they became. Marx felt that there was a need for a new economic and social system to liberate the vast majority of the people, the working class or the proletariat from the chains of oppression.

Check Your Progress II

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What are the historical and academic factors that contributed to Marx's thinking?

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2. Who were the left-wing Hegelians and what was their philosophy?

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3. Describe the characteristics of socialism.

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4. Describe the characteristics of Capitalism

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14.3 HISTORICAL MATERIALISM

The critique of Hegelian philosophy, different schools of socialism and capitalism, made Marx search for a new philosophy that would be instrumental in making communism a reality. He looked into history to see how societies had evolved from primitive communism to slave economies, to feudalism, and finally to contemporary capitalism. He believed that

once we understand the laws of the development of history, we could also direct them to achieve the goals we have. Marx's concept of historical materialism was his attempt to explain the historical process of development.

The materialistic interpretation of history holds that history is a product of human beings, men and women make history but they make it under given material conditions. The process of development and change is as follows.

Human beings have needs, and to satisfy these needs they enter into production. The mode of production is the manner in which men and women produce their means of existence. In the course of time, the modes of production become ossified into traditions and are handed down. It is this dynamic relationship to nature that Marx meant by the term productive forces.

Human beings do not produce as isolated individuals but as members of a community, the relationship within which is determined to a great extent by the modes of production. This economic structure constitutes the base of the society, on which superstructures like law, religion, and morality are built, to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. Within the economic structure itself, the productive forces determine the relations of production.

What triggers social change is the maturing of the contradictions within a given economic system: (i) conflict between new needs, and old mode of production; (ii) conflict between the terms in relations of production; (iii) conflict between base and superstructure and (vi) conflict between superstructures. When the conflicts mature and the possibilities within a given system are exhausted, one form of society gives way to another.

Human beings themselves are the most important agents of change, human beings who are aware of the conflicts and interests can change the course of history.

14.4 CLASS AND CLASS STRUGGLE

A class is a group of persons who stand in the same relation to property or to non-property, to the factors of production, such as labour power and means of production. We might say that a class is a group of people who by virtue of what they possess have to engage in the same type of activities if they want to make the best use of their endowments. Marx was not the first to articulate the concepts of class and class struggle. But Marx was the first to

see class and class conflict as central categories in the unfolding of history. Marx argued (1) that the existence of classes is linked to predetermined historical phases of the development of production; (2) that the class struggle necessarily leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat; and (3) that the dictatorship itself is only the transition leading to the abolition of all classes and the establishment of a classless society. In the *Manifesto*, Marx says that history hitherto has been a history of class struggle. As capitalism would develop and the capitalists would acquire more and more power and wealth, it would also create an impoverished proletariat. Two basic classes oppose each other in the capitalist system: the owners of the means of production, the capitalists, and the workers who have sold their labour power. The conflict between the bourgeois who does not want to give up their privileges, and the proletariat, who have become aware of their loss, of their alienation, of the inhuman situation in which they live and work, will create the conditions for a revolution. This revolution will be the prelude to the establishment of communism.

Check Your Progress III

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What is historical materialism?

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2. Describe class struggle and its implications.

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14.5 ALIENATION

For the first time in history, we live in a world where we have the technology and the means to produce enough to satisfy the needs of everyone on the planet, yet millions of lives are

stunted by poverty and destroyed by disease. Vast numbers of people live their lives characterized by feelings of desolation, loneliness and alienation. The situation is not natural or inevitable but the product of the existing socio-economic system, contemporary capitalism.

Marx developed his theory of alienation to reveal the cause of these contradictions, namely alienated human activity that lies behind the seemingly impersonal forces dominating the society. For Marx, alienation was not rooted in the mind, or in religion, as it was for his predecessors Hegel and Feuerbach but something rooted in the material world. Alienation meant loss of control, specifically the loss of control over worker's labour power, the product of labour, the other, and oneself.

14.6 ALIENATED LABOUR

Marx considers human labour as that through which humans are distinguished from non-human animals. Non-human animals do produce, but only for survival, and only in an instinctual manner. In contrast, humans are creative and make their life-activity and labour the object of their own will and consciousness. Marx sees capitalism as an economic and social system which has created and augmented productive forces greater than ever before in human history, yet it thwarts, distorts, and limits human potential. There are four aspects to alienated labour. The worker is alienated:

1. From products of one's own labour. The first aspect of alienated labour is the separation of the worker from the products of his/her labour. Under capitalism, commodities produced by labour are taken away from the worker and sold, and labour itself becomes a commodity. This alienation produces riches and power for the capitalist but enslavement and degradation for workers.
2. From the process of production. Under capitalism, work is controlled by employers and is external to the worker and is not experienced as part of one's nature. While working, the worker does not have a sense of fulfilment.
3. From species. In capitalism individuals act less and less like human beings, and more and more like machines. Humans produce when free from physical need, reproduce and construct the world in freedom in accordance with sense of beauty as a member of a society. This is the essence of production as a *species-being*. In capitalism production is drudgery and merely a means to survive. In the process one is forced to sacrifice what is genuinely human.

4. From other persons. Humans are also alienated from other human beings in capitalism, and human relations are reduced to market or exchange relationships. According to Marx, the exchange relationships are social relationships, even though they appear to have become only money relationships.

The division of labour, wage labour and private property are expressions of alienation. In order to end alienation, it is necessary to abolish private property and abolish the relationship between private property and wage labour. Marx believed that through class struggle that would culminate in a revolution which leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, private property would be abolished and by implication, alienation.

14.7 COMMUNISM

The aim of Marxism is to bring about a communist society, i.e., a classless society. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the nascent socialist society will be characterized by factors such as the

- abolition of private property
- abolition of inheritance
- abolition of division of labour
- universalization of education
- planned economy, rational and just allocation of the resources of the society

As socialism develops one could expect the “withering away of the state” and creation of a society where the norm is “from each according to his ability, to each according to his need,” as mentioned in the *Critique of Gotha Programme*. It will be “An association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” (The *Manifesto*). In a true communist society, there will be no more a place for religion.

“Communism is for us not a state of affairs which is to be established, an ideal to which reality will have to adjust itself. We call communism the real movement which abolishes the present state of things. The conditions of this movement result from the

premise now in existence.’ (*The German Ideology*).

Check Your Progress IV

Note: a) Use the space provided for your answer

b) Check your answers with those provided at the end of the unit

1. What is alienation?

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2. Describe the different aspects of economic alienation

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3. What are the characteristics of communist society?

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14.8 LET US SUM UP

Though Marx remains one of the most important thinkers even in the 21st century, the collapse of Soviet Union and other Eastern European economies, and the economic changes that are taking place in China, which still calls itself a communist state, makes a critique of what had been accepted by Marxists come across as a dogma. A critique in the context of contemporary realities is what Marx himself would have expected, for his favourite motto was, *De Omnibus dubitandum* (you must have doubts about everything). Marx never wanted his thought to be ossified into a dogma to be believed by his followers. His endeavour was to make the working class aware of their situation, and their responsibility in bringing about a classless society, where everyone will be able to develop all their potentialities unhindered by class divisions.

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14.10 ANSWERS TO CHECK YOUR PROGRESS

Check Your Progress I

1. Karl Marx is one of the most important thinkers of the 20th century, whose insights and critique of Capitalism are still relevant at this time of economic crisis, that is affecting large number of people throughout the world. Karl Marx is not only the principal socialist thinker of the last two centuries, but also one of the intellectual giants of all times. It was Marx who inspired the many left-wing socialist or communist revolutions that had changed the political landscape of 20th century.

2. Marx believed that human beings make their history but they make it under given circumstances. To understand Marxism, the story of Marx's life too is very important. He came to know about the plight of the proletariat during his stay in Paris, his journalism taught him the oppressive nature of the state. He himself experienced poverty and deprivation. In his search for a communist society, his own life and background played a very important role. Most of his life, he was in exile who understood the plight of contemporary proletariat, whose liberation was his life's mission.

3.

- Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts
- The Holy Family
- The German Ideology
- Theses on Feuerbach
- The Communist Manifesto
- The Grundrisse
- Theories of Surplus Value
- The Capital,

Vols. I,II,III

- Critique of Gotha Programme, etc.

Check Your Progress II

1. German classical philosophy, French Socialism, British Economics
2. Young Hegelians were a group of radical left-wing thinkers which included David Strauss, Bruno Bauer, Ludwig Feuerbach and others who were critical of Christianity, and the autocratic government of the time. Marx himself was a member of this group in his university days. They believed in the power of critique to change the situation, Marx gradually moved away from the group asserting that 'so far philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point is to change it'. His criticism of the young Hegelians can be seen in *The Holy Family*, *The German Ideology* and the *Theses on Feuerbach*.
3. Socialism is a social, economic and political system that stresses the needs of the community rather than of the individual. The system stresses collaboration against competition, sociability against individual self-sufficiency. It advocates social control on the accumulation and use of private property. Louis Blanqui, Fourier, Robert Owen etc., advocated different versions of socialism. Marx realized that there was a need for a radical critique of the existing socialist ideas and means to bring about real socialism. Marxian socialism emerged as a critique and a revolutionary transformation of the different schools of socialist thought and the political emancipation movements.
4. Capitalism is an economic theory which stresses that the means of production should be owned by private individuals. It is a system which believes that private ownership and free enterprise will lead to more efficiency, lower prices, and better products. Capitalists hold that enlightened self-interest and competition in the free market would benefit society as a whole by keeping prices low, while providing incentive for the production of a wide variety of goods and services. Capitalism advocates the division of labour, free market, and competition. Modern capitalism had created unprecedented wealth. However, the system makes the workers, the real producers of wealth alienated and poor.

Check Your Progress III

1. Historical materialism is the interpretation of history from the perspective of the working class who are the real creators of history according to Marx. Marx sees history as a dialectical process through which different forms of societies come in to existence and get transformed. The process of development and change is as follows.

Human beings have needs and to satisfy these needs they enter into production. The manner men and women produce their means of existence is the mode of production. In the course of time, the mode of production becomes ossified into traditions and is handed down. It is this dynamic relationship to nature that Marx meant by the term productive forces.

Human beings do not produce as isolated individuals but as members of a community. The relationship within which is determined to a great extent by the modes of production. This economic structure constitutes the base structure of the society on which superstructures like law, religion, and morality are built to which definite forms of social consciousness correspond. Within the economic structure itself the productive forces determine the relations of production.

2. (i) conflict between new needs and old modes of production; (ii) conflict between the terms in relations of production; (iii) conflict between base and superstructure and (iv) conflict between superstructures.

Human beings themselves are the most important agents of change, human beings who are aware of the conflicts and interests can change the course of history.

3. In the Manifesto, Marx says that history hitherto has been a history of class struggle. A class is a group of persons who stand in the same relation to property or to non-property, to the factors of production such as labour power and means of production. With the development of capitalism, the class struggle takes an acute form. Two basic classes oppose each other in the capitalist system: the owners of the means of production, or the capitalists, and the workers. When the workers have become aware of their loss, of their alienation, the inhuman situation in which they live and work, it will be possible for them to work for a radical transformation of the situation by a revolution. This revolution will be the prelude to the establishment of communism.

Check Your Progress IV

1. Alienation is not an individual problem or state of mind, but is an objective, observable feature of the manner in which human labour is organized. Marx developed his theory

of alienation to reveal the human activity that lies behind the seemingly impersonal forces dominating society. Alienation meant loss of control, specifically the loss of control over worker's labour power.

2. Marx considers human labour as that through which humans are distinguished from non-human animals. While labour is much more productive in capitalism than in earlier economic systems, capitalism thwarts, distorts, and limits human potential. There are four aspects to the alienated labour. The worker is alienated:

- from products of one's own labour,
- from the process of production,
- from species, and
- from other persons.

The division of labour, wage labour and private property are expressions of alienation. In order to end alienation, it is necessary to abolish private property and wage labour. Marx believed that through a class struggle that would culminate in a revolution which leads to the dictatorship of the proletariat, private property would be abolished and by implication, alienation.

3. The aim of Marxism is to bring about a classless society, a communist society free of alienation. The dictatorship of the proletariat and the nascent socialist society will be characterized by factors such as,

- the absence of private property
- the absence of division of labour
- the universalization of education
- the planned economy and
- the rational and just allocation of the resources of the society

As socialism develops and alienation disappears one could expect the "withering away of

the state” and creation of a society where the norm is “from each according to his ability to each according to his need.” The Communist society will be “An association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all.” – *Manifesto*



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